

SKILLS & ABILITIES TO:

1. Be flexible and open to change and growth.
2. Maintain relationships; to help child form attachments.
3. Be sensitive to child's needs.
4. Be willing to take part in teams/partnerships
5. Work with bureaucracy.
6. Learn new methods or techniques.
7. Carry out appropriate discipline in consistent ways.
8. Be willing and able to work with birth parents.
9. Have an understanding of the importance of the child's birth family.
10. Build self esteem through focusing on the child's strengths.
11. See success and progress in small steps.
12. See the need for contact or relationship with birth family.
13. Support the child emotionally.
14. Commit to carry out child's tasks and/ or responsibilities.
15. Attach or bond with child, and then let them go.
16. Accept and appreciate differences.

FEARS A FOSTER PARENT MAY HAVE

- Failure to help child
- Rejection from child
- System taking child away
- Not loving the child
- Incompetence to meet child's needs



Foster Care and Adoption Services



Norfolk Department of Human Services Resource Development Team

757-664-6079

www.norfolk.gov/humanservices

Foster Care & Adoption Services



Expectations of Foster Parents

TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Provide food, clothing and shelter.
2. Ensure daily school attendance, attend teacher conferences and attend IEP Planning Meetings.
3. Attend to children's health: regular medical and dental check-ups; get child to therapy; meet with therapist when requested; follow through with recommendations.
4. Include children in all family activities.
5. Recognize children's ties to their birth family.
6. Be available for visits with family; help children work on their Life Book; collect all report cards, letters, pictures, etc.; allow children to talk about their family.
7. Provide regular information to the agency about the children. For example: their feelings, health, behavior, school progress, unusual incidents, visitation, etc.
8. Contact agency immediately when problems or concerns arise.
9. Use alternatives to physical punishment. For example: Time Out, Behavior Charts, Natural and Logical Consequences.
10. Be clear about what the children *can* and *can-not* do in your home, and the consequences that will occur when rules are broken.

MESSAGES WE WANT TO GIVE TO OUR FOSTER CHILDREN

"Our home is safe"

"It is okay to love your family"

"What you feel and say is important"

"You can stay here as long as we and the agency feel you need to"

"You can trust us"

"You are likable"

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES NEEDED BY FOSTER PARENTS

KNOWLEDGE OF:

- Child and family development
- The Foster Care system
- Children's basic needs
- Grieving process - impact of loss and separation on the child and the family's behavior
- Community resources
- How to budget
- Special needs of children in care
- Abuse/Neglect and the impact on child development and behavior
- Sexual abuse and the impact on development and behavior
- School system
- Child specific information
- Parenting/behavior management techniques, alternatives to physical punishment



MOTIVATIONS OF FOSTER PARENTS

To rescue a child

Companionship

Support from the agency

Attachment to child

TASKS & RESPONSIBILITIES

11. Listen to the children and respond to what they say.
12. Accept the children's feelings, background, and family; try to avoid negative statements about children to be treated if they were in foster care.
13. Treat the children as you would want your children to be treated if they were in foster care.
14. Do not make promises you cannot keep, be consistent; follow through with commitments made to the child, his family and the agency.
15. Provide transportation.
16. Attend training provided by the agency.
17. Participate in the development of Foster Care Service Plan, Panel Reviews, and Dispositional Hearings.
18. Follow through with stated responsibilities in plan; meet with the agency to resolve problems when they arise and to avoid removal of the children.
19. Take care of yourself and use your family supports.
20. Complete forms in a timely manner.
21. Keep information about the children and their family confidential.

FANTASIES A FOSTER PARENT MAY HAVE

- They will change a child's life forever
- They can adopt this child
- Child will love them immediately
- Birth parents will change and be the perfect family
- If we just love them enough, all will be well
- Change will happen right away